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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Updates to the K-12 Education Tax Credit in Your Supplemental Budget
Initiative Supports Low Income Youth Participation in Academic Enrichment

Dear Governor Walz and Lt. Governor Flanagan,

Mankato Area United Way's Connecting Kids program helps to reduce the financial barrier for low-income youth to be involved in an out-of-school activity of their choice. To determine financial eligibility, we use the federal free and reduced meal program (FRP) to determine poverty levels. This income level works well as it takes into account family size.

To help stretch our funding, we also use and encourage families to utilize the K-12 Educational Tax Credit. However, the funding is limited to families that make less than \$33K. For the Mankato Area, 1 in 3 youth meet the FRP. Connecting Kids typically will provide scholarships to around 400 unduplicated youth & only about half would currently qualify for the K-12 Educational Tax Credit. For many families, this comes down to a decision on which of their children are able to participate in a program that by nature is designed to support their development growth. For low-income families this is truly heartbreaking.

I strongly urge you to continue advocating for and prioritizing this proposal as budget negotiations progress over the course of the legislative session while working with the bipartisan group of House and Senate members who have introduced their own proposals to update this tax credit.

I've personally seen the impact this tax credit can have on low-income students throughout the Mankato area. I believe in making these timely updates so more families and students can benefit from this important tool.

About Connecting Kids

Connecting Kids is a United Way program hosted through Mankato Community Education that provides scholarships to children K-12 to participate in quality out-of-school activities in Blue Earth, Le Sueur, Nicollet and Waseca Counties. <https://www.connectingkidsmankato.org/>

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